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jce880 U.S. PTO

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jce873 U.S. PTO
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McANDREWS, HELD & MALLOY, LTD.
34th Floor
500 West Madison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60661
(312) 775-8000

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
BOX PATENT APPLICATION
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Transmitted herewith for filing is the patent application of Inventor:

WILLIAM P. DAVIS

For: **FIRE-SAFE ELECTRONIC DATA STORAGE PROTECTION DEVICE**

1. Enclosed are:

- ☒ A Combined Declaration and Power of Attorney signed by the inventor.
- ☒ One (1) sheet of informal drawings.
- ☒ A verified statement to establish small entity status under 37 C.F.R. 1.9 and 37 C.F.R. 1.27 signed by the inventor.

2. Benefit of the filing date of each foreign priority document or U.S. provisional patent application listed below (if any) is claimed under 35 U.S.C. Section 119:

<u>Docket No.</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Appln. Serial No.</u>	<u>Filing Date</u>
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

3. The filing fee has been calculated as shown below, based on the assignee's status as a small entity:

	Claims Presented	Extra Claims	Rate per Extra claim	
Total Claims	21 - 20 =	1	X \$ 9	\$ 9.00
Indep Claims	1 - 3 =	0	X \$ 39	\$.00
Basic fee				\$345.00
Multiple dependent claim presented (\$135 if any present)				\$.00
Total Filing fee				<u>\$354.00</u>

4. The following arrangements have been made to pay the filing fee:

☒ [X] A check in the amount of \$354.00 to cover the filing fee is enclosed.

☒ [X] The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional filing fees which may be required under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 for this application and for any amendment thereto, or credit any overpayment to Account No. 13-0017.

5. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of the following fees during the pendency of this application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 13-0017.

☒ [X] Any patent application processing fees under 37 C.F.R.

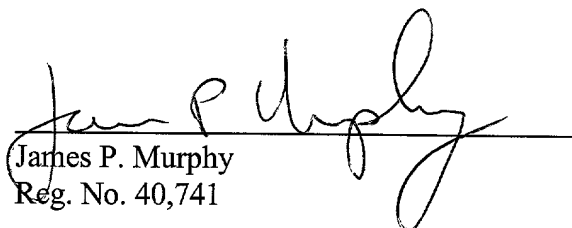
6. Please address all telephone calls to:

James P. Murphy at telephone no. (312) 775-8000.

7. Please address all correspondence to:

McAndrews, Held & Malloy, Ltd.
34th Floor
500 West Madison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60661

Date: August 16, 2000


James P. Murphy
Reg. No. 40,741

**VERIFIED STATEMENT (DECLARATION) CLAIMING SMALL ENTITY
STATUS (37 CFR 1.9(f) and 1.27(b)) – INDEPENDENT INVENTOR**

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that I qualify as an independent inventor as defined in 37 CFR 1.9(c) for purposes of paying reduced fees under section 41(a) and (b) of Title 35, United States Code, to the Patent and Trademark Office with regard to the invention entitled **FIRE-SAFE ELECTRONIC DATA STORAGE PROTECTION DEVICE** described in the patent application filed herewith.

I have not assigned, granted, conveyed or licensed and am under no obligation under contract or law to assign, grant, convey or license, any rights in the invention to any person who could not be classified as an independent inventor under 37 CFR 1.9(c) if that person had made the invention, or to any concern which would not qualify as a small business concern under 37 CFR 1.9(d) or a nonprofit organization under 37 CFR 1.9(e).

Each person, concern of organization to which I have assigned, granted, conveyed, or licensed or am under an obligation under contract or law to assign, grant, convey, or license any rights in the invention is listed below:

- ☒ no such person, concern, or organization
☐ persons, concerns or organizations listed below

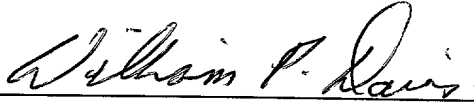
FULL NAME William P. Davis
ADDRESS 215 East Thorndale Avenue, Roselle, Illinois 60172

☒ INDIVIDUAL ☐ SMALL BUSINESS CONCERN ☐ NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

I acknowledge the duty to file, in this application or patent, notification of any change in status resulting in loss of entitlement to small entity status prior to paying, or at the time of paying, the earliest of the issue fee or any maintenance fee due after the date on which status as a small entity is no longer appropriate. (37 CFR 1.28(b)).

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application, any patent issuing thereon, or any patent to which this verified statement is directed.

William P. Davis
Name of Inventor


Signature of Inventor

Date: 8/1/, 2000

0964039-034600

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

TITLE OF THE INVENTION: FIRE-SAFE ELECTRONIC DATA STORAGE
PROTECTION DEVICE

INVENTOR: William P. Davis
215 East Thorndale Avenue
Roselle, Illinois 60172

ATTORNEYS: James P. Murphy
McANDREWS, HELD & MALLOY, LTD.
500 West Madison Street
34th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60661
(312) 775-8000

Background Of The Invention

Computers are used in homes and businesses to process and store data. Computer usage has become common in all aspects of business and personal life. Valuable data is often processed and stored on computers. Thus, periodic backups are maintained on separate data storage media to preserve backup copies of stored electronic data from a computer. Backups may help to ensure against loss of important data in case of a computer malfunction or other unforeseen contingency. However, computers and backup data storage devices generally are not

adequately protected against extreme environmental hazards, such as fire. It is believed that computer users generally do not adequately protect computers and data storage against extreme environmental hazards, such as fire.

In a fire, any computer device exposed to the fire would surely be damaged or destroyed.

As such, the most important part of the computer -- the data -- would be lost. While a computer or other piece of hardware and some software can be readily replaced, data which is lost or destroyed may be irretrievable.

U.S. Patent No. 5,623,597 discloses a data storage device which uses a heat sink and heat transfer system to transfer heat from inside the data storage device to outside the device and to prevent outside heat from being transferred inside the data storage device. The device requires a heat transfer system. The device also requires a controller to activate and deactivate the heat transfer system.

U.S. Patent No. 5,479,341 discloses a data security apparatus that protects data storage devices from adverse conditions. The apparatus has a control unit. The apparatus has sensors to detect adverse conditions. Upon detection, the control unit disconnects the data storage device and closes and locks the apparatus.

Current systems require elaborate controls and sensors to detect heat and react accordingly. Current systems may be more costly and more time consuming to manufacture. There is a need for a passive storage device capable of protecting electronically stored data during extreme environmental episodes on a continuous basis, and without complex controls, moving parts, etc. There is a need for a method of protecting electronically stored data during extreme environmental episodes while allowing for data transmission to the device.

Thus, a need exists for a device which protects electronically stored data during extreme environmental episodes, such as fire.

Field of the Invention

The present invention generally relates to secure storage of electronic data and, more particularly, relates to a device for continuously saving and protecting electronically stored data from fire and other environmental hazards.

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Summary of the Invention

According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a fire-proof enclosure is provided having at least one internal power supply link and at least one internal data link in constant communication with at least one central database to continuously store desired data and protect the stored data during fire or other environmental hazard. A preferred embodiment includes a non-thermally conducting resin or metal enclosure with a door and walls containing insulation; an electronic data storage device insertable and removable from the enclosure; a power cord within the enclosure and extending outside the enclosure and a data communication link within the enclosure and extending outside the enclosure. Within the metal walls is insulation of a suitable material and the power cord and the data link cord configured sufficiently to prevent fire or other environmental hazard from entering or affecting the contents of the enclosure.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 illustrates a preferred embodiment of a device for continuously saving and protecting electronically stored data from fire and other environmental hazards.

Figure 2 illustrates a preferred embodiment of baffling cords in a wall of a device for continuously saving and protecting electronically stored data from fire and other environmental hazards.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment

Figure 1 illustrates a preferred embodiment of a device 10 for continuously saving and protecting electronically stored data from fire and other environmental hazards. The device 10 comprises a system of components. The first component is fire-proof storage enclosure 20. Enclosure 20 is a six-sided box having an outer wall 26, inner wall 24, and a gap 28 between inner wall 24 and outer wall 26. One side of enclosure 20 is door 23. Door 23 is hinged to enclosure 20 for access to the inside. Gap 28 between inner wall 24 and outer wall 26 contains insulation material 31.

Walls 24, 26 may be any suitable material, such as steel or aluminum. A preferred embodiment may eliminate the thermally conductive material and use a non-thermally conducting material, such as resin. An example of an enclosure using resin material is described in U.S. Patent No. 4,541,545. Another example of an enclosure using resin material is described in U.S. Patent No. 5,377,514. An example of a preferred embodiment of an enclosure using a resin material may be a Sentry 1710 Fire-Safe® Media Chest made by Sentry Group.

Insulation 31 may be any suitable material such as a non-flammable, thermal insulating material with a substantial volume of chemically bonded water. An example of a non-flammable, thermal insulating material with a substantial volume of chemically bonded water is described in U.S. Patent No. 4,048,926. A preferred material may be foamed concrete containing substantial water in excess of the chemically bonded water. The foamed concrete may be preferably reinforced with a woven wire element or strands of reinforcing material. The foamed concrete preferably contains an aggregate holding absorbed water in excess of the chemically bonded water. An example of a foamed concrete is described in U.S. Patent No. 4,048,926. Another preferred material may be an insulation material such as fiberglass, foam, or polystyrene dry insulation.

Another component of the present invention is at least one power cord and at least one communication link within enclosure 20 extending outside of enclosure 20. At least two sets of

portals 34, 36 exist in inner wall 24 and in outer wall 26. Power cord 40 and data cord 44 extend from a position outside outer wall 26, through portals 36, within gap 28, through insulation 31 and through portals 34 inside enclosure 20 and terminate within enclosure 20. Within gap 28, cords 40 and 44 are woven within insulation 31 such that if storage enclosure 20 is exposed to a fire and cords 40, 44 burn, they will not burn into the inside of enclosure 20. In a preferred embodiment, cords 40, 44 are standard electrical cords extending outside enclosure 20. In a preferred embodiment, cords 40, 44 may be stripped of plastic and covered with a non-flammable ceramic material, such as ceramic insulation compound No. 93795K62 available from McMaster-Carr supply company, between walls 24, 26. Said non-flammable ceramic material may insulate cords 40, 44. In another preferred embodiment, cords 40, 44 may be baffled in or woven in serpentine fashion through the gap 28 in the walls 24, 26 to prevent hazardous environmental elements, such as heat and fire, from travelling through the cords to the interior of the enclosure 20. Cords 40, 44 baffled in the walls 24, 26 may or may not be covered with a non-flammable ceramic material. Figure 2 illustrates a preferred embodiment of baffling cords 40, 44 in the walls 24, 26.

In another embodiment, power cord 40 and data cord 44 may terminate for electronic access in at least one adapter port within the walls 24, 26 of enclosure 20. The adapter ports allow electronic communication between the interior and exterior of enclosure 20 through the gap 28 in the walls 24, 26. An external power cord or data cord may connect to power cord 40 and data cord 44 through the adapter ports in the wall 24, 26 of enclosure 20. In another embodiment, data cord 44 may be replaced by an infrared communications link, such as one well known in the art. Data may be transmitted via infrared transmission between an external data source 55 and the enclosure 20.

Each cord 40, 44 has a receiving end terminating within enclosure 20. At least one electronic data storage device 50 may be insertable into interior 21 of enclosure 20. Storage device 50 may be any type of data storage device, such as a Zip® floppy disc drive or a CD-

ROM tower or the like. Device 50 may be connected to power cord 40 and data cord 44 within enclosure 20. Device 50 thus may be in continuous data communication with a data source 55. Door 23 to enclosure 20 may then be closed.

Using appropriate software and any other known method, data from a data source 55 may be continuously, periodically updated and stored on the storage device 50. If the surrounding area is damaged or destroyed by fire or other similar environmental hazard, the data may be saved on device 50 and protected within enclosure 20.

In an example, an Iomega® Zip Drive was placed in a Sentry 1710 Fire-Safe® Media Chest. Power and data cords were run through the wall of the Media Chest. The power cord was connected to a power outlet. The data cord was connected to a serial port on a Toshiba Satellite Pro laptop computer. A thermometer was placed in the Media Chest. Software backups were executed on the laptop computer. The backup data was transferred through the data cord for storage on the Iomega® Zip Drive. Backups were run ten times a day, and each backup executed in approximately five minutes. The temperature in the closed Media Chest never rose above approximately ninety degrees.

Some suitable enclosures 20 of the present invention are disclosed in the following U.S. Patent Nos.:

Des. 289,582	4,800,823
4,048,926	5,152,231
4,263,365	5,377,514
4,541,545	5,623,597

each of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference. None of the above patents, however, discloses the elements herein disclosed and claimed, including use of power and data cords extending from the inside to the outside of the enclosure and specially configured.

While the invention has been described with reference to a preferred embodiment, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes may be made and equivalents may

be substituted without departing from the scope of the invention. In addition, many modifications may be made to adapt a particular situation or material to the teachings of the invention without departing from its scope. Therefore, it is intended that the invention not be limited to the particular embodiment disclosed, but that the invention will include all
5 embodiments falling within the scope of the appended claims.

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A data protection device comprising:

an enclosure have at least one wall and a closeable opening, said enclosure capable of protecting contents from environmental hazard;

5 at least one electrical connector within said enclosure for providing power inside said enclosure; and

at least one data transmitter within said enclosure for providing a data link between inside said enclosure and outside said enclosure;

10 said at least one electrical connector and said at least one data transmitter extending outside said enclosure for connection with at least one power source and at least one data source;

wherein said at least one electrical connector and said at least one data transmitter extend within said at least one wall in such manner to substantially prevent an environmental hazard from affecting contents of said enclosure.

15 2. The data protection device of claim 1, further comprising said opening being selectively openable and closeable by a user, and said opening being of sufficient size to allow insertion of at least one data storage device into said enclosure.

3. The data protection device of claim 1, wherein said contents of said enclosure may be continuously connected to said at least one power source and said at least one data source.

20 4. The data protection device of claim 1, wherein said environmental hazard includes fire.

5. The data protection device of claim 1, wherein said at least one electrical connector provides power inside said enclosure to said contents.

6. The data protection device of claim 1, wherein said at least one data transmitter provides a data link between said contents and said at least one data source.

7. The data protection device of claim 5, wherein said contents comprise at least one data storage device.

8. The data protection device of claim 6, wherein said contents comprise at least one data storage device.

9. The data protection device of claim 1, wherein said contents comprise at least one data storage device.

10. The data protection device of claim 1, wherein said at least one data transmitter comprises at least one infrared data transmitter.

11. A method of protecting a data storage device from environmental hazard, comprising:

enclosing said data storage device in an enclosure capable of protecting said data storage device from environmental hazard;

connecting said data storage device inside said enclosure to a power source outside said enclosure; and

connecting said data storage device inside said enclosure to a data source outside said enclosure.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said environmental hazard includes fire.

13. The method of claim 11, further comprising providing a continuous connection between said data storage device inside said enclosure and said power source and said data source.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein said connection between said data storage device and said data source comprises an infrared connection.

15. A method of protecting electronic data from environmental hazard, comprising:
storing electronic data;

5 enclosing said stored electronic data in an enclosure capable of protecting said stored electronic data from environmental hazard;

connecting said enclosure to a power source outside said enclosure; and

connecting said enclosure to a data source outside said enclosure.

16. The method of protecting electronic data according to claim 15, wherein said
10 environmental hazard includes fire.

17. The method of protecting electronic data according to claim 15, further comprising providing a continuous connection between said stored electronic data inside said enclosure and said power source and said data source.

18. The method of protecting electronic data according to claim 15, further
15 comprising storing said electronic data on a data storage device.

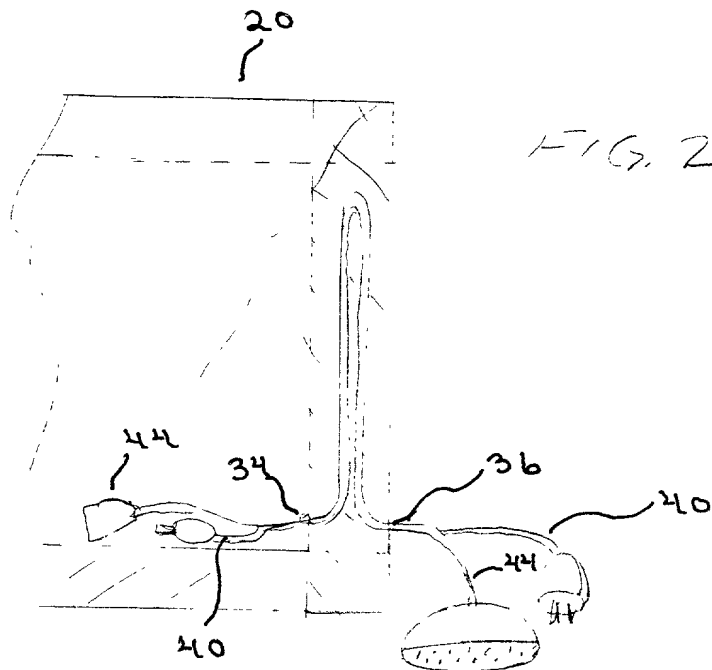
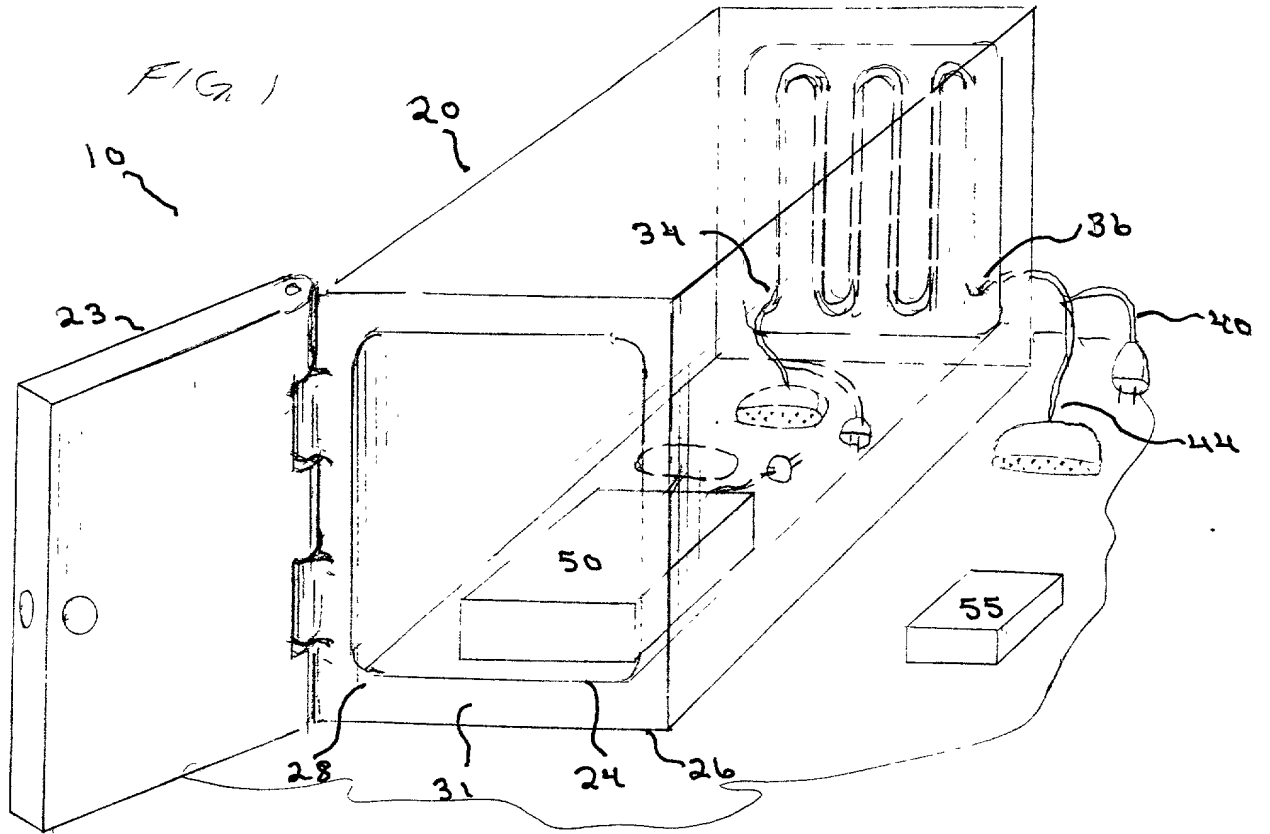
19. The method of protecting electronic data according to claim 18, further comprising connecting said data storage device to said power source outside said enclosure.

20. The method of protecting electronic data according to claim 18, further comprising connecting said data storage device to said data source outside said enclosure.

20 21. The method of protecting electronic data according to claim 15, wherein said connecting said enclosure to a data source outside said enclosure comprises an infrared connection.

Abstract of the Disclosure

A fire-safe electronic data storage protection device is provided which allows all-time data storage backup and protection. A preferred embodiment of the device includes a fire-proof enclosure having an openable and closeable door which can be opened after the device is exposed to a fire. The enclosure is of a sufficient size to store an electronic data storage device such as a Zip® drive or CD-ROM storage device or the like. Further, the walls of the enclosure are insulated to withstand fire and carry electronic connection and data relay cords, so that the electronic storage device inside may be in continuous connection with a main database and a power supply. The electrical and communication cords are configured within the insulation and walls of the enclosure to ensure no fire reaches the inside of the enclosure.



DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY
(Attorney Docket No. 12152US01)

As the below-named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled

FIRE-SAFE ELECTRONIC DATA STORAGE PROTECTION DEVICE

the specification of which was filed herewith.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56(a).

And I hereby appoint:

George P. McAndrews	Reg. No. 22,760
John J. Held	Reg. No. 21,061
Timothy J. Malloy	Reg. No. 25,600
William M. Wesley	Reg. No. 26,521
Lawrence M. Jarvis	Reg. No. 27,341
Gregory J. Vogler	Reg. No. 31,313
Jean Dudek Kuelper	Reg. No. 30,171
Herbert D. Hart III	Reg. No. 30,063
Robert W. Fieseler	Reg. No. 31,826
D. David Hill	Reg. No. 35,543
Thomas J. Wimbiscus	Reg. No. 36,059
Steven J. Hampton	Reg. No. 33,707
Priscilla F. Gallagher	Reg. No. 32,223
Stephen F. Sherry	Reg. No. 30,590
Patrick J. Arnold Jr.	Reg. No. 37,769
George Wheeler	Reg. No. 28,766
Janet M. McNicholas	Reg. No. 32,918
Ronald E. Larson	Reg. No. 24,478
Christopher C. Winslade	Reg. No. 36,308
Edward A. Mas II	Reg. No. 37,179
Gregory C. Schodde	Reg. No. 36,668
Edward W. Remus	Reg. No. 25,703
Donald J. Pochopien	Reg. No. 32,167

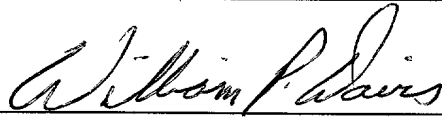
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Sharon A. Hwang	Reg. No. 39,717
David D. Headrick	Reg. No. 40,642
Dean D. Small	Reg. No. 34,730
Alejandro Menchaca	Reg. No. 34,389
Kirk A. Vander Leest	Reg. No. 34,036
Richard T. McCaulley, Jr.	Reg. No. 41,977
Anthony E. Dowell	Reg. No. 39,661
Peter J. McAndrews	Reg. No. 38,547
Jonathan R. Sick	Reg. No. 43,920
Eligio C. Pimentel	Reg. No. 42,076
James P. Murphy	Reg. No. 40,741
Dean A. Pelletier	Reg. No. 45,007
Michael B. Harlin	Reg. No. 43,658
John F. Nethery	Reg. No. 42,928
James Nuttall	Reg. No. 44,978
Joseph M. Barich	Reg. No. 42,291
Scott P. McBride	Reg. No. 42,853
Patricia J. McGrath	Reg. No. 44,919

the address and telephone number of each of whom is McAndrews, Held & Malloy, Ltd., 500 West Madison Street, 34th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60661, telephone number (312) 707-8889, as my attorneys with full power of substitution and revocation to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Full name of sole inventor: William P. Davis

Inventor's signature:  Date: 8/1/, 2000

Resident Address: 215 East Thorndale Avenue, Roselle, Illinois 60172

Citizenship: U.S.A.

Post Office Address: 215 East Thorndale Avenue, Roselle, Illinois 60172